

Testimony for Public Hearing
Appropriations Committee
February 20, 2009
Linda Lentini
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Plainville, CT 06062
HB No. 6365

My name is Linda Lentini and I live in Plainville Ct. I am a person in recovery from co-occurring disorders. I am here to talk about restoring the funding for supportive housing and to prevent any more cuts for DMHAS funding.

Wikipedia defines a traumatic event as "Involving a single experience, or an enduring or repeating event or events that completely overwhelm the individual's ability to cope or integrate the ideas and emotions involved with that experience". How many events lead to a person having a hard time coping with life and deciding to give up? How many events did it take the gentleman to pull over on 84 and give up? How many events would it take in your life for you to give up? What would you do to get the help that you needed and will it be there if you need it?

My situation is not uncommon to many people that I work with today at Advocacy Unlimited, Inc. My childhood was interrupted by a traumatic event when I was four and I started to self-medicate when I was six. My parents are from Canada and were unaware of places and programs available to help me. I was able to get treatment in my early twenties but unfortunately it was too late to stop addiction from enveloping my life. My lost childhood years were too much for me to deal with and I ended up numbing all that pain. The trauma of my early life did not allow me the luxury of avoiding the judicial system and incarceration ended up being my recovery. I was able to put my life back together because I had housing, employment, and relapse prevention services. DMHAS was one of the services that allowed me to get my life back together.

What about all the persons in recovery that do not have housing, employment, or community based services available due to the lack of funding? How can we ignore the rights of so many people that want to have a home, a job, and to have services available to them so that they can live a full life? I am not sure how my life would have ended up if I did not get the help that I needed.

My hope for the future is to move forward with the supportive housing, Person Centered discharge planning, recovery support services, and employment/educational resources. We need to help people, like myself, that want their life back and need help getting back on their feet.

Thank you for your time and patience in this matter.